

TITLE 35  
BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT  
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF OIL AND GAS

SERIES 5  
DESIGNATION OF FUTURE USE AND INACTIVE STATUS FOR  
OIL AND GAS WELLS RULE

§35-5-1. General.

1.1. Scope -- This legislative rule establishes requirements pertaining to the operator's designation of bona fide future use of wells and certification of inactive status and information and data to be required by the chief as necessary to such designation.

1.2. Authority -- WV Code §§22-6-1; 22-6-2; 22-6-3; 22-6-4; 22-6-5; 22-6-6; 22-6-7; 22-6-11; 22-6-19; 22-6-23; 22-6-24; 22-6-26; 22-6-28; 22-6-29; 22-6-30; 22-6-32; 22-6-34; 22-9-5; 22-10-1 through 12.

1.3. Filing Date -- June 6, 1993

1.4. Effective Date -- July 1, 1993

1.5. Forms -- rule. An index of all current forms and copies of any forms currently used under or required by this rule may be obtained from the chief. The Office of Oil and Gas reserves the right to amend any forms perspectivevely to accord more fully with WV Code §22 and this rule.

§35-5-2. Definitions:

Unless the context in which used clearly requires a different meaning, the definitions contained in WV Code §22-1-2 and 22-6-1 shall apply to this rule in addition to the definitions set forth below:

2.1. "W Va. Code" shall mean the West Virginia Code of 1931, as amended.

2.2. "Abandoned well" shall mean any well which is completed as a dry hole or which has not produced in commercial quantities for a period of twelve consecutive months.

2.3. "Active Status" shall mean any well producing oil or gas in commercial quantities, or being operated pursuant to underground injection control permits, or being operated in conjunction with the underground storage of hydrocarbons.

2.4. "Barrel" shall mean forty-two (42) U. S. gallons of two hundred thirty-one (231) cubic inches each of liquid,

including slurries, at a temperature of sixty (60) degrees Fahrenheit.

2.5. "Chief" shall mean the Chief of the Office of Oil and Gas as designated by the Director of the Division of Environmental Protection.

2.6. "Completion of the drilling process" shall mean the date on which a drilling rig ceases operation on the drilling site for more than thirty (30) consecutive days.

2.7. "Cubic foot of gas" shall mean the volume of gas contained in one (1) cubic foot at a standard pressure base of fourteen point seven three (14.73) pounds per square inch (absolute), and a standard temperature of sixty (60) degrees Fahrenheit.

2.8. "Gas-oil ratio test" shall mean a test, by any means generally accepted in the industry, to determine the number of cubic feet of gas produced per barrel of oil produced.

2.9. "Gas well" shall mean any well which produces or appears capable of producing a ratio of six thousand (6,000) cubic feet of gas or more to each barrel of oil on the basis of the initial gas-oil ratio test.

2.10. "Initial gas-oil ratio test" shall mean the gas-oil ratio test performed for the purpose of completing Form WR-36, "Well Operator's Report of Initial Gas-Oil Ratio Test," to designate the type of well.

2.11. "Log or Well log" shall mean a systematic, detailed geologic record of all formations, including coal, fresh water, and salt water encountered in the drilling of a well.

2.12. "Oil well" shall mean any well which produces or appears capable of producing a ratio of less than six thousand (6,000) cubic feet of gas to each barrel of oil on the basis of the initial gas-oil ratio test.

2.13. "Payout ratio" shall mean for the purposes of this rule, the ratio of the estimated gross receipts of income from the well divided by the estimated cost of completing and placing the well into production.

2.14. "Production in commercial quantities" shall mean production of natural gas or oil or both from a well or reservoir which is either sold or delivered to one other than the operator, or retained by the operator or any owner of the production at severance for beneficial economic use: Provided, that natural gas used for the testing of natural gas wells or for other field

uses which are production related, shall not be considered produced in commercial quantities.

§35-5-3. Procedure for Designation of Bona Fide Future Use.

3.1. Any operator seeking designation of bona fide future use for a well shall submit to the chief a Designation of Bona Fide Future Use on forms prescribed by the chief which shall require the following information:

3.1.a. The name and address of the operator;

3.1.b. The location of the well;

3.1.c. The API number of the well;

3.1.d. A viable plan for utilizing the well including an estimated time for commencement of the future use of the well; and

3.1.e. Any other information requested by the chief.

3.2. The operator shall file a separate designation of bona fide future use for each well for which it seeks a determination from the chief.

3.3. In order to extend the inactive status period, the operator shall file a new Designation of Bona Fide Future Use on forms prescribed by the chief within two (2) weeks prior to the end of the inactive status period.

The operator shall notify the chief of a change in an inactive well's status to either active or abandoned within thirty days after the change in status.

§35-5-4. Demonstration of Designation of Bona Fide Future Use.

4.1. For any well which is not in active status, an operator must demonstrate bona fide future use to avoid having such well deemed abandoned under WV Code §22-6-19. In order to establish bona fide future use, the operator shall submit information and data sufficient to satisfy the chief that there is a bona fide future use for the well. The operator should consider the following information:

4.1.a. The date on which the well was completed;

4.1.b. The method which the well meets the financial responsibility requirements of WV Code §22-10-4 and §22-10-5;

4.1.c. The date on which the well first produced;

- 4.1.d. The results of the initial gas-oil ratio test;
- 4.1.e. The last date on which the well was producing;
- 4.1.f. The average monthly production at the time production ceased;
- 4.1.g. The formation(s) from which the well produced;
- 4.1.h. The estimated remaining recoverable reserves associated with the well without reworking the well;
- 4.1.i. Whether reworking the well to recover additional reserves is possible;
- 4.1.j. The estimated remaining recoverable reserves associated with the well after reworking;
- 4.1.k. The method used to establish reserve estimates in subdivisions 4.1.h and 4.1.j;
- 4.1.l. Whether secondary recovery is possible;
- 4.1.m. Whether production from other formations is possible;
- 4.1.n. Whether the well can be drilled deeper;
- 4.1.o. The estimated cost to deepen the well;
- 4.1.p. Whether the well is covered by a gas sales contract;
- 4.1.q. Whether the well is connected to a gas meter, or how it is measured at the transfer of ownership or custody;
- 4.1.r. Other equipment connected to the well;
- 4.1.s. Whether the well is connected to a pipeline system;
- 4.1.t. A description of the line pressure of the receiving pipeline;
- 4.1.u. Whether a compressor is in place and whether it is in use on the well;
- 4.1.v. If the well is not connected to a pipeline, the distance to the nearest pipeline that would accept production from the well;

4.1.w. Whether a shut-in royalty is being paid;

4.1.x. The operator's schedule for putting the well into production;

4.1.y. Whether the well is capable of use for gas storage;

4.1.z. Whether the well is capable of being used as a liquid injection well;

4.1.aa. Whether money has been escrowed for use to plug the well in the future; and

4.1.bb. Any other information which the operator considers relevant to establishing a bona fide future use.

#### §35-5-5. Inactive Status.

5.1. Upon submittal of a completed Designation of Bona Fide Future Use to the chief, any permitted well which satisfies the following requirements shall be deemed to be in inactive status:

5.1.a. The condition of the well is sufficient to prevent waste of oil or gas;

5.1.b. The condition of the well is sufficient to prevent pollution of waters of the state; and

5.1.c. The operator satisfies the bonding requirements of WV Code 22-6-1 et seq.

5.2. The chief shall determine whether sufficient data and information have been provided to make a determination that the well has a bona fide future use and is properly deemed in inactive status.

5.3. The chief may require the operator of any well in inactive status to monitor the mechanical integrity of such well, and to require the operator to submit reports on the integrity of the well to the chief.

5.4. The inactive status of any well with a designation of bona fide future use shall be valid for the time period requested by the operator, not to exceed five (5) years from the date of filing with the chief, unless inactive status is revoked pursuant to subsection 5.5 of this rule, or unless the operator elects to extend the inactive status period pursuant to the provisions of subsection 3.3 of this rule.

5.5. The chief may revoke the inactive status of any well upon a finding that:

5.5.a. The operator has failed to comply with the provisions of WV Code §22-6-1 et seq;

5.5.b. The operator has failed to comply with the provisions of this rule;

5.5.c. The well does not satisfy the requirements of this rule; or

5.5.d. The well does not have a bona fide future use.

5.6. Any well that is not in active or inactive status shall be deemed abandoned and shall be promptly plugged by the operator.

§35-5-6. Effect on Nongovernmental Actions.

Neither the filing (submission or completion) of the operator's designation, nor the well's status as inactive pursuant to this rule or WV Code 22-6-19, nor acceptance, receipt, review, report, consideration or termination by the chief of the Office of Oil and Gas shall be admissible as evidence as to the truth of a matter asserted regarding a claim or cause of action between nongovernmental parties.